

Message

What you need to know to start your day.

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Environment -
Environment & Energy
Report
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PM
To: Duffy, Rick
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Would Feel Shutdown
Pain • Pesticides'
Persistence • Law Firm
Billing

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Parks Would Feel Shutdown Pain • Pesticides' Persistence • Law Firm Billing



By [Chuck McCutcheon](#)

President Trump's insistence on a spending bill with border-wall money has raised the chances of a partial government shutdown this weekend—and led the EPA and Interior Department to dust off their contingency plans.

If a shutdown happens, the National Park Service will immediately stop providing visitor services such as restrooms, trash collection, and road and facilities maintenance. Only about 3,300 of its 24,681 employees would be retained.

The Fish and Wildlife Service, which protects endangered species, would furlough all but 1,331 of its 8,359 employees. And the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement would shrink from 421 workers to a mere eight.

The EPA would be in a better situation—at least for the short term. It would use carryover funding—money it has left over that hasn’t expired—to sustain most agency operations. But a shutdown invites “calamitous results” for the agency’s chemicals program, one chemicals attorney warns.

PESTICIDES’ PERSISTENCE: Three pesticides that have dominated recent headlines—chlorpyrifos, glyphosate, and dicamba—will continue making news in 2019 as lawyers and corporations spar over whether they harm people and plants.

Each of the pesticides has been around for decades. Manufacturers have kept making them because they are effective and relatively inexpensive.

But chlorpyrifos, an insecticide linked to neurodevelopmental delays in children, could be banned if the EPA is forced to comply with a court order to revoke all uses on food crops. Glyphosate, the world’s most common herbicide, was pegged a “probable” carcinogen by an international cancer research agency in 2015. And dicamba is allegedly responsible for millions of acres of damage on neighboring crops.

Tiffany Stecker explains further in a 2019 Outlook story now out. Follow her on Twitter.

LAW FIRM BILLING: Major law firms are waiting longer for clients to pay their legal bills. The lengthened billing cycle can be attributed to corporate clients taking more care and time to evaluate their outside counsel spending, at times using software to examine legal bills line by line.

“Legal used to be a bit off limits, and there was no control whatsoever,” Mark Smolik, general counsel of DHL Supply Chain told Bloomberg Law. “But now we know exactly what we are getting if there is a bill for \$1,000 an hour.”

The increased evaluation time can delay firms’ abilities to make decisions about budget and employee compensation, which are often based on revenue calculations. Firms also can lose significant percentages of legal fees as legal departments root out costs they don’t feel compelled to pay.

Elizabeth Olson has the [story](#).

OTHER STORIES WE'RE COVERING

- Climate change is forcing cities and towns to raise homes, businesses, and public buildings above the expected height of future storms—in some places by as much as 15 or 20 feet. But that vision of resilience is forcing painful questions about whether and how the disabled can remain part of those communities, Bloomberg News' Christopher Flavelle ([@cflav](#)) writes in a story out today.
- Ryan Zinke is gone from President Trump's Cabinet, but he won't soon be forgotten, Stephen Lee ([@sk_lee](#)) says on the [latest edition](#) of the Parts Per Billion podcast.
- Two pieces of GOP-backed forest management policy [made it](#) into the farm bill. One expands the existing "Good Neighbor" program so that county governments can collaborate in forest restoration activities. Another reauthorizes a categorical exclusion for insects and disease treatments, also to limit the threat of wildfires. Both pieces of legislation were spearheaded by Arizona Republican Rep. Paul Gosar.
- A bill directing the Energy Department to review and update a report on the energy and environmental benefits of [recycling used motor oil](#) has passed the Senate and awaits Trump's signature.
- Today is the deadline for anyone who wants to participate in Ontario's legal challenge of a [federal carbon tax](#). Environment, tax, and provincial governments recently rushed to join Saskatchewan's similar challenge. Both cases have hearings in early 2019. James Munson ([@james_munson](#)) is watching.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Did he just say that? Ugh, are you ruining my life?"

—Maine GOP Sen. Susan Collins, [upon learning](#) that President Trump vowed not to sign a spending bill because it lacked money for a border wall.

AROUND THE WEB



Women in Chikwawa, Malawi, listen to a briefing on drought in September 2016.

Photographer: Andrew Rennaissen/Getty Images

- Climate change is contributing to increased violence against women in Malawi. “We walk longer distances for firewood and water. We now walk for four hours,” one says. “And sometimes, when we reach the forest to fetch for firewood, we get raped.”
- Dogs are helping to save endangered species.
- The EPA has new data showing the capacity for contaminated lands, landfills, and mines to be redeveloped for renewable energy uses.
- Samantha Slater is moving from the Renewable Fuels Association to the Air-Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Institute to serve as vice president, government affairs.

TODAY'S EVENTS

- **1 p.m. • California** • California Legislative Analyst's Office releases two reports on the state's climate policies.
- **4 p.m. • Alaska** • OneNOAA Science Seminars holds webinar briefing with National Weather Service on Alaska's climate outlook.

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